

Government of the District of Columbia
ZONING COMMISSION



ZONING COMMISSION ORDER NO. 186

CASE NUMBER 76-14P

OCTOBER 13, 1977

Pursuant to notice, a public hearing of the District of Columbia Zoning Commission Case was held beginning on March 14, 1977 and continued on April 4, April 28, June 6, and June 30, 1977. At these hearing sessions, the Zoning Commission considered an application by George Washington University and the Concordia United Church of Christ for preliminary approval of a planned unit development.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On January 15, 1977, the George Washington University (hereinafter the "University") and Concordia United Church of Christ (hereinafter the "Church") filed an application for preliminary approval of a planned unit development, in Square 121 for Lots 16, 17, 807, 808, 809, 811, 813, 814, 816, 817 and the public alley proposed to be closed. The application contemplated a change in zone from the R-5-C District to the C-3-B District. The property is bounded by 19th, 20th, "F" and "G" Streets, N. W. and initially comprised all the land in Square 121 except Lot 810, which is known as 612 19th Street, N. W.

2. The area of the subject site involved in the application totalled approximately 78,562.11 square feet. The area of the subject site owned by the University at the date of the application was 67,303.04 square feet. The University acquired lot 810 from Mrs. Hugh Obear subsequent to the filing of the application which increased the area in Square 121 owned by the University and part of the PUD to 68,794.82 square feet, which includes the public alley proposed to be closed.

3. During the course of the hearing, the Church withdrew as a co-applicant, leaving the site with an area of 68,794.82 square feet, including all of Square 121 except for the northeast corner of the Square consisting of Lot 17.

4. The application for preliminary approval of a planned unit development as originally filed proposed two stages of construction. The first stage involved the erection of an office building 130 feet in height and 12 stories, with an FAR of 7.0 and a total gross floor area of 468,608.77 square feet. This proposed building was designed to house offices of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank). The building would occupy the total land area within Square 121 excepting the aforementioned Lot 810 (formerly owned by Mrs. Obear) and Lot 17 owned by the Church. Stage two of the construction, which was to occupy the site of the Church and which has since been eliminated, proposed an office building of 120 feet in height and 7.0 FAR.

5. Plans for the building designed to house the offices of the World Bank filed at the time of the application called for a T-shaped building which occupied the entire "F" Street frontage with the stem portion of the "T" extending through the middle of the Square to "G" Street. This plan provided for the retention of the two Lenthall Houses at 612 and 614 19th Street and a garden area at the northeast end of the square adjacent to 19th and "G" Streets which extended southward to create a garden setting for the two Lenthall Houses. This plan also proposed the moving of the Alexander Ray House from its present location at 1925 "F" Street to a site on the west side of 21st Street between "F" and "G" Streets. The applicant filed an alternate "A" plan with substantially the same design excepting that the facades of the five townhouse structures on "G" Street were to be dismantled and reassembled as part of the construction of the new building. This would have resulted in a height of 30 feet along "G" Street extending back to a depth of approximately 35 feet, with the building rising to a height of 130 feet at that depth.

6. The effect of the PUD application and rezoning is to increase the maximum permitted floor area ratio from 3.5 to 7.0, and to increase the maximum permitted height from 90 to 130 feet. A change in use would also be permitted. The R-5-C District presently permits all kinds of residential uses (including single family dwellings, flats, apartments, rooming and boarding houses and hotels) as a matter of right, and college and university uses, as well as certain other special exceptions, with approval of the Board of Zoning Adjustment. The proposed use under the C-3-B category is as offices and supportive accessory uses, such as storage, parking, cafeteria, etc.

7. The World Bank has a major operation in place, occupying over 900,000 square feet with approximately 3,600 employees, in the complex of six buildings located in the square bounded by 18th, 19th, "G" and "H" Streets, N. W., immediately northeast of the subject square. In addition, the World Bank leases over 300,000 square feet of additional space, for approximately 1,200 additional employees, at scattered locations in the area. The World Bank would like to concentrate all its employees in one central area in buildings that it owns. The subject square is a reasonable location for offices for the World Bank, given the proximity to existing bank offices, the capital investment by the Bank in those offices, the proximity to other elements of the international community including the International Monetary Fund, and the location vis-a-vis the State Department and other Federal executive agencies.

8. The subject square is presently occupied by ten buildings, including three historic landmarks. The landmarks are the Alexander Ray House (located at the northeast corner of 20th and "F" Streets, N. W. and a Category II Landmark on the local inventory) and two Lenthall Houses (located on the west side of 19th Street between "F" and "G" Streets and Category II landmarks on the local inventory and the National Register of Historic Places). The Ray House is used as a private club and two Lenthall Houses are residences. The remaining buildings include the Concordia United Church of Christ and rectory located at the southeast corner of 20th and "G", and five residential type structures located on the south side of "G" Street between 19th and 20th. The remainder of the square is devoted to parking lots as interim uses under the campus plan, at the southwest corner of 19th and "G" and the northwest corner of 19th and "F" Streets.

9. The subject property is located on the border between the high density office-retail area comprising the central core of the Downtown area and the residential-university area of Foggy Bottom. Immediately to the north, northeast, and east are high density, 130 foot office buildings one of which houses the International Monetary Fund and others which house existing facilities of the World Bank. Additionally to the east is a 90 foot apartment house. To the southeast is the national office of the Federal General Services Administration which is 110 feet in height to the top of the structure. To the south are a 90 foot GWU dormitory, two smaller three-story residential structures, one housing the Embassy of Uruguay, and a three story office building. To the southwest is a block of 90 foot apartment houses. To the west is a 90 foot GWU dormitory and some three-story row-houses, used by GWU

and various fraternities. To the northwest, the square is devoted entirely to GWU buildings, varying in height and use.

10. Nineteenth and Twentieth Streets are major arterial highways, 19th Street is one-way southbound and 20th Street is one-way northbound. "F" and "G" Streets are local Streets and carry limited local traffic.

11. The subject site is well served by public transportation with numerous buslines operating on adjacent or nearby streets. The Metro stations at Farragut West (18th and Eye) and at Foggy Bottom - George Washington University (23rd and Eye Streets) are within walking distance of the site.

12. The zoning originally adopted in 1958 limited the major commercial zoning categories (C-3-B and C-4) to the area closest to Pennsylvania Avenue. The SP category was applied to the property fronting on "E" Street, and extended as far north as "F" Street east of 18th Street. The remainder of the area was zoned R-5-C. By 1966, this pattern had been substantially altered. Commercial zoning had been extended as far west as 19th Street and as far south as "F" Street. The SP District had been extended to "F" Street between 19th and 20th Streets, and R-5-D zoning had been applied to the south side of "F" Street west of 20th Street. The present zoning pattern has been altered since 1966 only by the extension of C-3-B zoning to part of the square bounded by 19th, 20th, "G" and "H" Streets, immediately north of the subject square. This zoning was changed as part of a PUD approved for the International Monetary Fund. The result is that the subject site is bounded on the north by C-3-B zoning, on the northeast by C-4, on the east by C-4 and C-3-B, on the southeast by unzoned Federal property, on the south by SP, on the southwest by R-5-D and on the west and northwest by R-5-C zoning.

13. Square 121 is located within the University campus plan area approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment on December 22, 1970 in Case No. 10403. The general boundaries of the campus plan are 19th Street on the east, Pennsylvania Avenue on the north, "F" Street on the south, and 24th Street on the west. The illustrative campus plan shows the easterly portion of the square designated for high density office use and provides for the retention of the Alexander Ray House, the Church and Church rectory located on the westerly portion

of the square. Square 120 which is occupied by IMF and lies on 19th Street is not included and a portion of the property in Square 122 adjacent to 19th and "F" Streets is included.

14. The Municipal Planning Office, by report dated February 23, 1977 and by testimony at the hearing, recommended approval of the application with a height of 130 feet and an FAR of 7.0. It prepared extensive architectural studies to show that there would be no material difference in impact between a height of 90 feet as presently permitted and a height of 130 feet as requested as to adjacent buildings. It recommended that the Ray House and the Lenthall houses be preserved at their present locations. It supported the demolition of the "G" Street houses and recommended that the architectural treatment along "G" Street provide an appropriate streetscape and the inclusion of commercial or neighborhood type uses that would provide life and vitality to the Street. The Municipal Planning Office stated that the application met the standards of Section 7501 as a planned unit development and that it should be approved on a preliminary basis, for the following reasons:

- A. The application proposes a mix of old and new buildings.
- B. The application proposes to preserve certain historic buildings and properties.
- C. The site is a reasonable location for offices of the World Bank, in proximity to other functions which relate to the Bank.
- D. The George Washington University campus plan proposes an office building on part of the square.
- E. The proposal would not create unacceptable impacts on surrounding properties, and could be serviced by existing public facilities.
- F. The application proposes use of certain innovative zoning mechanisms, including the transfer of development rights from existing structures to be preserved.

This initial Municipal Planning Office report was supplemented by a report of alternate development studies for the square.

15. The Department of Transportation, by report dated

March 11, 1977 and by testimony presented at the hearing, recommended that the Zoning Commission limit the number of parking spaces in the new building to 130, approximately the number of spaces as are currently on the site. This would be desirable in order to encourage greater use of mass transportation, which serves this area. The Department also reported that there is adequate capacity on surrounding streets to accommodate the proposed development.

16. The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), by report dated December 2, 1976 and by testimony at the hearing recommended approval of the applicant's plans including a change of zoning from R-5-C to C-3-B with an FAR of 7.0 and a height of 130 feet, excepting that the "F" Street frontage should be limited to 110 feet. They recommended the relocation of the Ray House to a site beyond Square 121 and the retention of only the Lenthall Houses, and raising no objection to the demolition of the "G" Street house. The NCPC prepared and presented an up-dated report dated June 2, 1977 that reflected the effect of the University's acquisition of 612 19th Street from Mrs. Obear and the withdrawal of the Church as a co-applicant. The up-dated report of the NCPC recommended that the Lenthall Houses could be appropriately located off Square 121 and that the Ray House and garden should be retained at their existing locations. Further, NCPC rescinded its earlier recommendation that the height of the proposed structure be limited to 110 feet on "F" Street.

17. The Fine Arts Commission, by letter dated January 3, 1977 and by testimony presented at the hearing, recommended that the Ray House be retained on its present site, that the design of the new building minimize the impact on the Lenthall Houses, that the facades of the "G" Street houses be preserved, that the corner of 19th and "G" Street be retained as open space and that in order to achieve these ends, that additional height and space could be granted to the applicant.

18. The Joint Committee on Landmarks submitted a report dated June 1, 1977, in which the Committee express its belief that historic structures should be removed from their original sites only when there is no feasible alternative for preservation. The Committee went on to state that if any of the historic landmark structures on Square 121 must be moved, then relocation of the Lenthall Houses was preferable to relocation of the Ray House. The Committees recommendations for relocation of the Lenthall Houses, in order of preference were (1) on the west side of 21st Street between "F" and "G" and south of Strong Hall, (2) on 21st Street north of the Woodhull House and (3) a location north of the Ray House.

19. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2-A appeared as a party in opposition to the application. The ANC opposed the application on the grounds that the erection of a 130 foot office building would be out of scale and character with the neighborhood, and that the impacts of noise, traffic and other effects would adversely effect the surrounding residential neighborhood. The ANC also opposed the application on the grounds that the proposed building would adversely impact on several historic buildings within the squares.

20. Don't Tear It Down and the Committee for the Campus appeared as parties in opposition. These groups did support the concept that a new building for the World Bank could be constructed on the square if the Ray, Lenthall and "G" Street houses were preserved, if the building contained commercial or community uses on the ground floor, and if the building height was limited to be more consistent with the existing structures in the square and the area.

21. Testimony from the ANC and from several members of the Council of the District of Columbia was directed at the loss of potential real estate tax revenue from the site, because both the World Bank and the University do not pay such taxes on property used for the purposes of the organization. The net loss of real estate taxes would be very small, since the site would yield less than \$26,000 in real property taxes at present. If the World Bank were to purchase some other site presently zoned for office use, the net loss might be greater.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The planned unit development process is an appropriate means of controlling development of the subject site, since control of the use and site plan is essential to insure compatibility with the neighborhood and the existing historic buildings on the site.

2. The development of this PUD carries out the purposes of Article 75 to encourage the development of well-planned residential, institutional and commercial developments which will offer a variety of building types with more attractive and efficient overall planning and design without sacrificing creative and imaginative planning.

3. Approval of the application would be consistent with the purposes of the Zoning Act, "to promote such distribution of land uses as would tend to create conditions

favorable to health, safety, transportation, prosperity, protection of property, civic activity and recreational, educational and cultural opportunities and as would tend to further economy and efficiency of supply of public services."

4. The proposed application can be approved with conditions which would insure that development would not have an adverse effect on the surrounding community.

5. The approval of the application would promote orderly development in conformity with the entirety of the District of Columbia zone plan as embodied in the Zoning Regulations and Maps of the District of Columbia.

DECISION

The Zoning Commission is of the opinion that it is appropriate for the World Bank to locate offices in the subject square, provided that the development shall be controlled to insure that it will not have unacceptable negative effects. It is therefore ordered that the application for preliminary approval of planned unit development in Square 121, for Lots 16, 807-811, 813, 814, 816, 817 and the public alley proposed to be closed be approved subject to the following guidelines, conditions and standards:

1. An application for a change in zoning from R-5-C to C-3-B shall accompany the application for final approval of the planned unit development.
2. The Ray House, located at 1925 "F" Street, shall be retained and preserved on its present site along with its gardens to the rear and side. Such building shall be used as a residence, private club, for some university related purpose by George Washington University or for some function of the World Bank. The preservation of the building shall be insured by covenant.
3. The Lenthall Houses, located at 612 and 614 19th Street, shall be preserved and may be moved to another site. If those houses are moved, they shall be moved to a site on the west side of 21st Street, between "F" and "G" Streets, N. W. The houses shall be used as residences or for some university related purpose by George Washington University. The preservation of these buildings shall be insured by covenant.

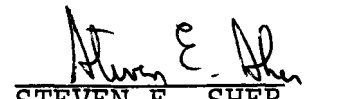
4. The overall floor area ratio for the site shall not exceed 6.0.
5. Any new building shall be restricted to use by the World Bank as office space and supporting accessory uses, including but not limited to library, cafeteria, computer space, etc. The building may also be used for a university-related purpose by George Washington University. The street floor of the building shall be used for retail and commercial uses which would be directly accessible from the exterior of the building and would be open to the public at large. The applicant shall submit with the final application, for approval by the Zoning Commission, a list of commercial uses proposed to occupy the street floor.
6. The maximum height of any new building shall not exceed 130 feet to a depth of approximately 120 feet from the 19th Street right-of-way. For that portion of the site which lies further than approximately 120 feet from the 19th Street right-of-way, the maximum height of the building shall not exceed 60 feet.
7. Any new building to be constructed on the site shall not extend west of the line which separates the property of the Concordia United Church of Christ and George Washington University, as that line is extended south to intersect the "F" Street right-of-way.
8. Off-street automobile parking shall be provided at the rate of one space for each 1800 square feet of gross floor area. The World Bank shall prepare and submit with the final application a program for allocating parking spaces to car pools on a priority basis.
9. Off-street loading berths shall be provided at the minimum rate specified for a C-3-B District.
10. A convenient and secure parking area for a minimum of twenty-five bicycles shall be provided on the ground floor or first cellar level of any new building.
11. The ground floor of any new building, particularly

at the corner of 19th and "G" Streets, N. W. shall be designed and used in such manner as to promote public and pedestrian access and amenity.

12. Particular attention should be paid to the design of any new building as it faces the Ray House and the Concordia Church.
13. The applicant shall submit a generalized landscape plan with the application for final approval showing treatment proposed for the Ray House garden and any other areas proposed to be left open.

Vote of the Commission taken at the public meeting on September 8, 1977: 4-0 (Richard L. Stanton, Walter B. Lewis, Theodore F. Mariani and Ruby B. McZier to approve with conditions, George M. White not present, not voting).


THEODORE F. MARIANI
Chairman


STEVEN E. SHER
Executive Director

This order was adopted by the Zoning Commission at its public meeting held on October 13, 1977 by a vote of 4-0 (Ruby B. McZier, Walter B. Lewis, Theodore F. Mariani and George M. White to adopt, John G. Parsons not voting, not having participated in the case).

In accordance with Section 2.611 of the Rules of Practice and Procedure Before the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia, the Order is effective on 14 OCT 1977.